

**SLOW FASHION OR SELF-SIGNALING?
SUSTAINABILITY IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY**

Madalena Maria Silva Ferreira Migueis Duarte

Dissertation presented as a partial requirement for the degree
of Master of Information Management, Specialization in
Marketing Intelligence.

NOVA Information Management School
Instituto Superior de Estatística e Gestão de Informação
Universidade Nova de Lisboa

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Supervisor: Carina Castagna

Co-Advisor: Diego Costa Pinto

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ABSTRACT

Over the years, the awareness about the consequences of consumption and the concerns for sustainability have been increasing, shifting consumers' behavior towards such causes. However, the motivation to adopt such behaviors are unclear, making it relevant to consider whether sustainable behaviors are used to strengthen their sense of self, as a self-signal. This research investigates how self-signaling influences consumers' willingness to adopt sustainable behaviors in the fashion industry, extending prior research on the motivations to adopt sustainable consumption behaviors that are not entirely altruistic and might also reflect self-interest motives (i.e., ownership and status). Findings from 2 studies are used to test the proposed model and suggest that individuals are more inclined to engage in positive word of mouth (WOM) about sustainable fashion practices when they have stronger symbolic signaling feelings for such practices. Additionally, these feelings induced by Slow Fashion elevate strong status motives. By doing so, this research addresses the gap between consumers' actual attitudes towards fashion sustainability and the reasons why they are acquiring such behaviors in respect to self-signaling. This research has key implications for researchers and fashion industry practitioners, on how Slow Fashion is associated with self-signaling, ownership and status motives.

KEYWORDS

Sustainable Fashion | Slow Fashion | Fast Fashion | Ownership | Self-Signaling | Status | WOM

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1. INTRODUCTION

The fashion industry has been known to be one of the major industries that contribute to environmental destruction, where Fast Fashion¹ emerges as the main actor (Grazzini, Acuti & Aiello, 2021). In fact, almost three-quarter of apparel ends up in landfills, worsened by the increase of materials like polyester, that are non-biodegradable and highly harmful for the environment (Legere & Kang, 2020). There has been a major concern to start thinking more critically about sustainability in fashion, for both brands and consumers and, nowadays, sustainability initiatives are becoming crucial to companies' strategies. This is where Slow Fashion² and Thrift Shopping³ arise, at the expense of Fast Fashion. Accordingly, green consumption emerges as an encouraging solution that allows consumers to express their ethical attitude towards sustainable consumption. Further, consumers obtain a moral sense of satisfaction from reducing waste, lowering their environmental footprint and extend the useful life of clothing, by adapting their purchasing behaviors (Lo, Tsarenko & Tojib, 2019).

In the last few years, there has been a major concern related to the actual environmental crisis, shifting in behaviors towards sustainability and concerns about scarcity of natural resources. Companies with the ability to adapt to the demands of our changing world, in particular the urgent need for sustainability, will be more likely to succeed in the long term and own some strategic benefits (White, Habib & Hardisty, 2019). As a matter of fact, there is an urgent need for companies to engage in cleaner production processes. Consumers are getting increasingly aware about the fragile state of the environment, indeed it has been stated that fashion consumers are interested in purchasing sustainable fashion items and are willing to pay a higher price for them, if the quality is good (Blasi, Brigato & Sedita, 2020). However, there are still many individuals that position themselves against fashion sustainability. Effectively, fashion consumption has come to a point where Fast Fashion has detached consumers' buying habits from their real physical needs (Peters, Li & Lenzen, 2021).

There is a lack of studies that apply self-signaling theories (e.g., Dixon & Mikolon, 2020), ownership (e.g., Weiss & Johar, 2016), Word of Mouth (hereafter, WOM) (e.g., Lisjack, Bonezzi & Rucker, 2021) and status motives (e.g., Jami, Kouchaki & Gino, 2020), associating it to sustainability in the fashion industry. To the best of our knowledge this is the first study that applies these three concepts together and relates them with sustainability in the fashion industry. Ownership will be included mainly because for Fast-Fashion, for example, the ownership phenomenon is reflected more roughly, considering that it provides clothes at a very affordable price (capturing trends more immediately) that are, posteriorly, quickly discarded (Lamberton & Goldsmith, 2020). Also, there are some actions in the acquisition process of goods, like imagining that one owns the good and touching or holding it, that are sufficient to increase perceived ownership for a good before its acquisition (Atasoy & Morewedge, 2017), being the focal point of analysis. It is also important to explore the

¹ Fast Fashion is described by the rapid increase in both supply and demand for cheaply manufactured clothing, characterized by a low cost, low durability and mass quantity nature (Grazzini, Acuti & Aiello, 2021), representing a dangerous cycle to the environmental and social sustainability.

² Slow Fashion is a movement based on the slow food movement that started in Italy in the 1980s, as a reaction to the increase of fast-food. Slow fashion focuses on the materials used to produce clothes and emphasizes slowing down both the consumption and the production processes, uplifting sustainable values among everyone participating in the fashion system (Legere & Kang, 2020).

³ Thrift Shopping represents another option of eco-conscious shopping in the fashion industry. Thrifting is the opportunity to give lightly worn clothing a second chance, with much more affordable prices than people can find in regular stores.

reasons that underlie a conscious fashion consumption behavior by consumers, associated with altruism or self-interest, since consumers use physical products to signal their identities (Grewal, Stephen & Coleman, 2019). For example, consumers' choice towards Slow Fashion or Thrift Shopping are usually based on acts of signaling information about their internal qualities to their own self through the choice made, we will analyze how self-signals from such decisions influence gained consumer value from the choice between standard products and their "green" versions (Dixon & Mikolon, 2020). Further, and directly associated to this signaling of information occurrence, status will be analyzed, by exploring whether consumers engage in sustainable fashion practices to signal status information to others (and/or themselves). Indeed, nowadays, sustainability is increasingly associated to a marker of status, once consumers might engage in green consumption to signal their wealth and concern for the welfare of the humanity (Amatulli, *et al.*, 2020).

This paper aims to examine the extent to which self-signaling, ownership, WOM and status motives have influence on consumers' decision to make more conscious choices regarding the fashion industry. More specifically, extend the understanding of what actually stands behind the reasons for consumers' shift in behavior, leading them to embrace green causes and choosing environmentally friendly options related to fashion. According to identity signaling theory, owning and consuming products enables consumers to communicate something about themselves and these types of signals can only be communicated through ownership (Grewal, Stephen & Coleman, 2019), being one of the main proposals of this study. WOM is one of the constructs to analyze, since it is considered to be one of the most influential means of persuasion and one of the main predictors of a company's growth (Lisjak, Bonezzi & Rucker, 2021). Therefore, we aim to investigate if people consider sharing the word to their friends or family about sustainable fashion practices. We also intend to explore if status stands behind consumers' will to purchase sustainable fashion products, once, adopting environmentally friendly consumption habits can signal positive characteristics to others (Dixon & Mikolon, 2020). This is an interesting topic to investigate, since Slow Fashion items (also including luxury products) are characterized for having higher quality and longevity than cheaper apparel, typically classified as Fast Fashion products, and, for this reason, these items can give statement to people in general, being the main reason for them to buy those products (Griskevicius, Tybur & Bergh, 2010).

The present article is structured as follows: We begin by reviewing evidence from prior research relevant to each of the constructs mentioned above and explain our contribution in this area. Next, we specify the proposed model and respective hypothesis that we intend to test. We define the method, indicating the structure of the field studies that will test the hypothesis. Concluding with the findings and results obtained, as well as a final discussion where we mention the theoretical contributions, managerial implications and limitations and directions for future research, intended to inspire the development and continuation of the topic.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Sustainability in the fashion industry has been gaining attention in the last few years and consumers are becoming increasingly worried about the consequences that their consumption habits might have on the environment. Thus, the recent rise on the Fast Fashion phenomenon implies the faster movement of trends, inferring extremely short product life cycles, giving rise to an intense pressure on manufacturers to create and supply new product lines as fast as they can (Pal & Gander, 2018). As such, Fast Fashion products are especially attractive for consumers who follow a culture of impulsive buying and prioritize continuous change in their fashion consumption habits (Blasi, Brigato & Sedita, 2020), who rapidly throwaway or accumulate barely used garments (Peters, Li & Lenzen, 2021). In fact, 73% of 53 million tons of garments produced every year end up in landfills or incinerated (Forbes, 2018). Fashion products include characteristics that hold primary value to the consumer, being an industry that, by 2030, is expected to grow 102 million tones in volume and generate \$3.3 trillion in value (Lehmann, *et al.*, 2019), accounting for 2% of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Wang, *et al.*, 2019).

The vast majority of research in this domain has focused more on the industry and companies' side (e.g., Moretto, *et al.*, 2018; Peters, Li & Lenzen, 2021; Pal & Gander, 2018), so our goal is to present a deeper investigation into consumers' behavior and perceptions on the topic. Therefore, our theorizing offers an important counterpoint to the existing gap in literature, since our primary research motivation is to acknowledge the main reasons that stand on consumers' shift in behavior regarding sustainability in the fashion industry, as these can, many times, be personally related or sometimes mostly linked to the individuals' external environment. Thus, we propose that there is a strong correlation between self-signaling, ownership, WOM and status motives, as they stand as theories that can have a high impact on consumers' behavior. Accordingly, consumers judge themselves in line with traits of products they own and when they choose to own products that are associated with positive traits, as such self-signaling theory forecasts that people judge themselves steadily with traits of that product (Weiss & Johar, 2016). Additionally, previous research reinforces that identity, ownership and status have a direct correlation (e.g., Jami, Kouchaki & Gino, 2020; Pierce, Kostova & Dirks, 2003; Griskevicius, Tybur & Bergh, 2010; Johnson & Chattaraman, 2018). In fact, consumers feel a greater sense of ownership over products associated with their self (Sheehan & Dommer, 2019) along with the fact that consumers use products for status signaling, conveying information about their personality and character to observers (Fuchs, *et al.*, 2013; Johnson & Chattaraman, 2018).

2.1. SELF-SIGNALING AND THE ADOPTION OF A FASHION CONSCIOUS BEHAVIOR

Self-signaling comes up in the analysis because it comprises a theoretical approach that suggests that altruism is when an individual's voluntary actions work for a common benefit and not (just) for their own. Theoretics have defined altruism as a "(...) behavior motivated by authentically selfless motives (...)" (Johnson & Chattarman, 2018, p. 7). On the other hand, when one's behavior has a higher interest on the impact it has on his/her own life than its surroundings, their actions are characterized as selfish or self-interest. Connecting this to the context of sustainability in fashion, people may engage in Slow Fashion or Thrift Shopping, at the expense of Fast Fashion, as a way to: self-signal something to the society with a variety of reasons behind this decision, such as making a favorable impression on others and presenting themselves on a positive light (Green & Peloza, 2014); to signal ones' willingness and ability to incur costs for others' benefits (Griskevicius, Tybur & Bergh, 2010); or simply as a way to

activate status motives for the society (Lin & Chang, 2012), etc. Individuals stand on solid purposes when asked what led them to a specific behavior, namely practicing Slow Fashion, that can directly or indirectly have a positive impact on the common good. However, that does not necessarily mean that this was the immediate motive for embracing this type of behavior and this is where self-signaling takes part in this work's conceptual model. Besides this, as divulged by Johnson & Chattaraman (2018): "Consumption is a social act, which affords individuals the ability to express their identity (...)" (p. 2). In such cases, people behave approaching to sustainability not properly based on the benefits that the attitude brings to the environment or society in general, but for the benefit of the self. In reality, self-interest is the main motivational force central to human behavior (Khan, Goldsmith, & Dhar, 2020), together with the fact that, in most of those cases, even though people can end up helping others, their primary reasons are egoistic or self-serving (White & Peloza, 2009).

Previous research suggests that when a person faces a situation of having to opt for any product (in this case, apparel) the choice made in that moment uncovers consumers' underlying dispositions (Dixon & Mikolo, 2020). As a matter of fact, consumers, many times, purchase products not necessarily for their functional characteristics, but to benefit from the symbolic value endorsed to that product (Grewal, Stephen & Coleman, 2019). In addition, Green & Peloza (2014), suggest that the act of opting for environmentally friendly products should be encouraged by the concern for the environments' welfare and not by the concern for oneself, therefore, consumers should give up personal benefits when making such choices. Furthermore, earlier work has shown that the purchase of non-sustainable items causes feelings of guilt in consumers and these feelings of guilt increase consumers' future intentions for purchasing ethical products, so consumers are encouraged to connect with sustainable brands to lighten their feelings of guilt for purchasing unethical products (Newman & Trump, 2017). Thus, this research foresees that the decision to embrace Slow Fashion, rather than Fast Fashion, is linked to a positive self-signal revealing an underlying disposition that an individual is responsible and morally good instead of selfish and careless, usually known as negative traits (Dixon & Mikolo, 2020).

We predict that consumers' growing proximity to Slow Fashion practices, hence sustainable fashion behavior, gives rise to strong feelings of symbolic signals, meaning that consumers, by adopting a sustainable fashion behavior, feel that they are doing something that others do not and, at the same time, feel that they are caring about the environment. In fact, the way individuals perceive themselves might affect the degree to which they believe that Slow Fashion would bring them closer to their ideal selves, being, also, of extremely importance to understand the reasons that take consumers to choose to embrace Slow Fashion over Fast Fashion. In other words, it is vital to understand if it is altruistic or self-interest motives that stand behind individuals' decisions, considering that not everyone is willing to change their behavior in this sector because of factors like price, fit or convenience (thereby self-interest motives) (Legere A & Kang J, 2020). Plus, it is stiff to convince consumers of the environmental concerns of the clothing industry, as their individual fashion goals take priority most of the times (Shrivastava, *et al.*, 2021). Finally, as suggested by Groot & Steg (2010), the more individuals are altruistically oriented, the more they are self-determined, therefore with higher intentions to act pro-environmentally.

Based on this, we start by investigating the connection between adopting a sustainable fashion behavior and symbolic signals. Specifically, we hypothesize that the strength of symbolic signals is magnified with individuals' association to Slow Fashion, when compared to Fast Fashion. Formally:

H1: Individuals' association with Slow Fashion increases the strength of symbolic signals, compared to Fast Fashion.

2.2. WORD-OF-MOUTH AND STATUS MOTIVES CORRELATION WITH EMBRACING SLOW-FASHION

The social media and internet explosion was accompanied by an increasingly share of product experiences and reviews among individuals online (Chen 2017). This phenomenon is known by Word-of-Mouth (WOM), which used to be preserved in a small circle of contacts in the offline world and is now, in a tremendous amount, visible online (Seiler, Yao & Wang, 2017). WOM is responsible for an undeniable influence on consumer preferences, since it is considered to be more credible, authentic, relevant and unbiased, when compared to firm-generated communications (Allard, Dunn & White, 2020). In fact, literature suggests that other consumers recommendations can help reduce uncertainty and possible difficulties in purchase decision (Moise, *et al.*, 2019). This rapid dissemination of opinion can be particularly positive and beneficial for firms (e.g., Trusov, Bucklin & Pauwels, 2009), as well as extremely negative, in particular, companies in the fashion industry, that many times experience negative WOM due to their questionable production processes (Amatulli, *et al.*, 2020). In fact, a survey review conducted by BrightLocal, suggested that negative reviews can have a meaningful impact on consumer behavior, making 92% of consumers less likely to use a business (Murphy, 2021). Additionally, firms should consider WOM as a valuable part of their marketing and advertising strategies, as consumers call on WOM to learn about product quality and its features (Joshi & Musalem, 2021), together with the fact that consumers mostly garner information about sustainability through online search (35%), social media (31%) and non-digital print media (29%) (Lehmann, *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, it would be beneficial if firms fall back on, for example, social media communications (via celebrities or influencers), since they can powerfully drive consumers' WOM in the fashion industry (Shrivastava, *et al.*, 2021).

This works' conceptual model suggests that there is a direct correlation between the variables in analysis. Actually, WOM can be motivated by a desire to help others, to advise about a poor service and/or to communicate status (Kozinets, *et al.*, 2010). Plus, connecting these theories with fashion sustainability, in particular status motives, is strengthened by the fact that, recently, values that are not necessarily linked to social hierarchy and purchasing power – that are usually directly connected to status – such as environmental consciousness have become new symbols of status (Amatulli, *et al.*, 2020). Additionally, previous research shows that activating peoples' status motives increases their wish for buying sustainable products, this occurs because a choice for purchasing an item that signals self-sacrifice, together with the chance to incur extra costs because of a perception that green products usually cost more and are of lower quality than their standard (not sustainable) equivalents (Lin & Chang, 2012). White, Habib & Hardisty (2019), proposed that individuals are prone to act in a socially desirable manner in public contexts, where other people can observe and evaluate their actions. Thus, we propose that individuals' association with Slow Fashion practices might uplift strong status motives.

Individuals frequently engage in some kind of behavior (here embracing Slow Fashion, for example) to signal information for themselves or for an audience (status), this takes place by experiencing the feeling of ownership for the products they want to use to signal that specific information. For example, as divulged by Jami, Kouchaki & Gino (2020), ownership often contributes to individuals' sense of power, including both social power and their personal power. In addition, choosing to engage in altruistic gestures contributes to enhancing one's reputation (when these

gestures are considered costly to them), since they can signal to an audience that they have the ability to afford extra costs (Aspara & Wittkowski, 2018). In fact, and as published by Dixon & Mikolon (2020), choosing an environmentally friendly product over a standard one signals to others that the individual cares for the environmental welfare, whereas one's choice for a standard product, instead of a green product, will signal that the person is selfish for putting other benefits above environmental ethics. Hereupon, it is vital to understand what correlation status motives have with people's shift in behavior towards sustainable fashion practices. Indeed, purchases can conspicuously signal one's characteristics to others and green products can become especially attractive when they cost more than their non-green option (Griskevicius, Tybur & Bergh, 2010). Therefore, the choice of adopting sustainable behaviors in the fashion industry stands as an act of signaling information about consumers' internal qualities to their own self or to the society, the latter referring to status motives.

Retailers with green orientation achieve greater market share and financial gains as well as increased consumer satisfaction (Menguc and Ozanne, 2005; Gleim, *et al.*, 2013), which may lead to positive WOM about sustainable products or brands. Nowadays, WOM has been acquiring attention amongst practitioners and it is becoming clearer that firms should use WOM to encourage brand message sharing and incentivize individuals to share their own consumption experiences (Vázquez, Du & Lanza, 2020), in this case sustainable fashion practitioners should take this in consideration. In fact, consumers regularly learn something from their peers via WOM (Joshi & Musalem, 2021). So, we theorize that exposition to Slow Fashion can have strong and positive outcomes in terms of symbolic signaling and these outcomes can lead to positive WOM, where symbolic signaling mediates this relationship. This model also anticipates that strong symbolic signals induced by Slow Fashion can result in strong status motives. This can be explained by the fact that people usually use their possessions to influence how others will view them (Pierce, Kostova & Dirks, 2003). In addition, literature also suggests that status works as a mean of social affirmation (Bellezza, Paharia & Keinan, 2016) which, many times, leads to acquiring products to enhance individuals' characteristics among the society they are included. As such, we posit that exposition to Slow Fashion can have strong and positive outcomes in terms of symbolic signaling and status motives, where symbolic signaling is, therefore, the mediator between the two independent and dependent variables (Fashion practices – Slow Fashion vs. Fast Fashion - and status and WOM, respectively). Given our proposed effect of WOM and status on fashion sustainability and symbolic signals, we hypothesize that:

H2: Symbolic signals mediate the relation between Slow Fashion (vs. Fast Fashion) and both (a) WOM and (b) status motives.

H3: Symbolic signals induced by Slow Fashion practices, elevate both (a) positive WOM and (b) strong status motives.

2.3. THE ROLE OF OWNERSHIP IN SHAPING SUSTAINABLE FASHION CONSUMPTION

The concept of ownership is indispensable to be associated with Slow Fashion consumption. In the same way it can be considered a psychological experience, it can also be associated with an objective characteristic of consumption. Recent research indicates that individuals tend to classify owned goods as part of the self and un-owned products as "not self" (Lamberton & Goldsmith, 2020). Indeed, ownership, or the feeling that something is "mine", has been gathering growing attention in the last few years (Kirk, Peck & Swain, 2017), being possible that as an outcome of ownership, status motives arise, since they are directly related to possessions of goods. Feelings of ownership towards

any product have strong psychological and behavioral effects (Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2003). In addition, consumers look for and/or purchase items that somehow represent aspects of their identity, being likely that, after consuming those items, people recycle them instead of throwing them away (Sheehan & Dommer, 2019). We believe that this is an important insight in the relationship between ownership and sustainable fashion practices that contribute to the environments' welfare. However, research also proposes that ownership increases consumers' desire to keep clothes for a longer period of time (Harding, *et al.*, 2018).

It is known that the world, including both companies and consumers, is getting increasingly aware of the unpleasant aspects behind the fashion industry. In fact, recently the millennial generation started to show higher preference for renting items rather than owning them, so it is no accident that online rental subscription services are on the rise, since consumers are increasingly looking for flexibility in their wardrobes and these services give them access to thousands of products that they probably wouldn't be able to afford (Reyes-Velarde, 2017). Indeed, previous work has shown that due to the rapid growth of technological innovations, we are facing a consumption evolution, in which individuals are shifting from a legal ownership of goods (where consumers purchase and consume their own private goods) to models of legal access, wherein consumers purchase temporary access rights to goods and services owned and used by others (Morewedge, *et al.*, 2020). Thus, as mentioned, a growing number of consumers are keen on using rental clothing, being increasingly captivated by non-ownership consumption attitudes (Shrivastava, *et al.*, 2021).

Psychological ownership is a state that is directly connected to possessions and reflects a persons' awareness, thoughts and beliefs about what he/she owns (Jami, Kouchaki & Gino, 2020). Hence, reinforcing, once again, the importance of including ownership in this work's conceptual model. Therefore, considering that consumers can experience psychological ownership when they customize items and/or services they acquire (Jami, Kouchaki & Gino, 2020), we suppose that ownership has direct implications on the choice of embracing Slow Fashion and symbolic signals induced by such fashion practices. In fact, psychological ownership promotes a connection between consumers and brands, being optimistically associated with consumer demand for goods and services, willingness to pay, customer satisfaction, relationships, word of mouth and loyalty towards the brand (Morewedge, *et al.*, 2020).

Furthermore, material goods arise to satisfy a wide variety of desires and needs, where the simple act of wearing a product can induce an ephemeral feeling of ownership, where consumers take on products' traits (Weiss & Johar, 2016). Moreover, there is an urgent need for the fashion industry to shift into a system that fosters eco-friendly products with sustainable manufacturing processes, reducing the existing waste (Shrivastava, *et al.*, 2021). Given this, we propose that ownership might have a strong connection with the adoption of a more conscious behavior in the fashion industry, this can easily be explained by the fact that possessions have a major role in the owner's identity, to a point where they become part of their extended self (Pierce, Kostova & Dirks, 2003). Particularly, we argue that individuals' association with Slow Fashion increases the strength of symbolic signals (compared to Fast Fashion), under the moderation role of ownership. This leads to our hypothesis 4:

H4: Ownership acts as a moderator between fashion practices (Slow Fashion vs. Fast Fashion) and symbolic signaling.

2.4. OVERVIEW OF THE PRESENT RESEARCH

We test the hypothesis and conceptual framework depicted in Figure 1 in two studies. We argue that self-signaling, ownership, WOM and status motives can help explain the primary considerations that are behind consumers' shift in behavior, when it comes to sustainable fashion products. Study 1 demonstrates that individuals that engage in Slow Fashion have stronger symbolic signals feelings, than the ones that embrace Fast Fashion. We further test our conceptual model by showing that those symbolic signals mediate the relation between Slow Fashion practices and both WOM and status motives. With Study 2, we tested the moderation role of ownership concerning fashion practices (Slow Fashion vs. Fast Fashion) and symbolic signaling. Finally, we delve into the relation between symbolic signals, WOM and status motives, by showing that those symbolic signals induced by sustainable fashion practices elicit positive WOM towards such causes and elevate strong status motives.

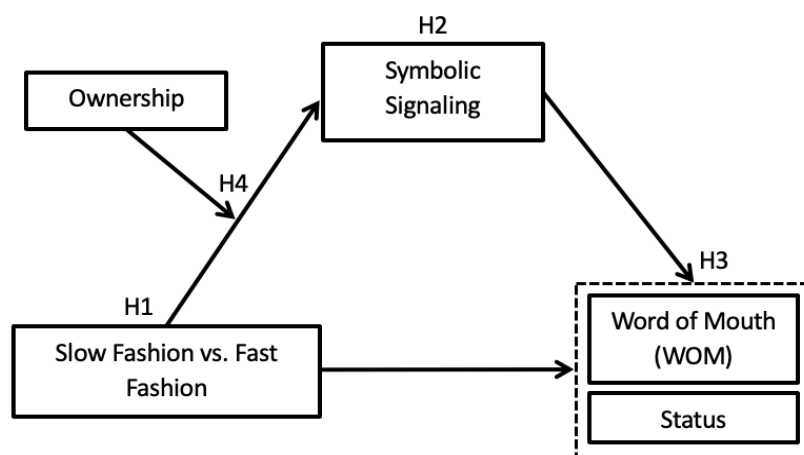


Figure 1 - Conceptual Model

3. METHOD

We next present 2 studies to test the hypothesis and theoretical model, depicted in Figure 1. First, Study 1 investigates the mediating role of symbolic signaling construct and explores how participants position themselves in relation to sustainable fashion behaviors associating them to self-signaling constructs, searching for a correlation with WOM towards Slow Fashion. Study 2 aims to derive stronger causal inferences about the moderating role of ownership by manipulating ownership through the customization of a clothing item, also including mine-me sensitivity items, the 6 fresh start mindset items and status (or impression) constructs, to capture how participants stand within these areas. In addition, respondents completed some further scales, including demographic questions. In all our studies, we report all conditions and measures collected.

3.1. STUDY 1

3.1.1. METHOD

Given the need to understand consumers' habits and, especially, perceptions in the fashion industry (in terms of possible enablers and barriers to sustainable apparel purchase behavior - Jacobs, *et al.*, 2018), more specifically, on Slow Fashion, Fast Fashion and Thrift Shopping, Study 1 was conducted with major focus on self-signaling and ownership scales (see Appendix B for complete detailed description of the study method scales used). This study was developed on Qualtrics based on a one factor three level design, where respondents were randomly exposed to three different ways of shopping in the fashion industry, including: Slow-Fashion (stores that sell only sustainable, with conscious production processes, clothes), Fast-Fashion (regular shops that sell cheaply manufactured clothing for low prices) and Thrift Shops (selling high quality, second-handed clothing). In each condition respondents saw a basic white t-shirt that they liked at the specific store (see Appendix C for image). The questionnaire was developed to garner deeper insights on consumers' ways of interacting with sustainable fashion practices and understand how they position themselves in terms of self-signaling and ownership constructs.

Sample. One hundred and eighty-nine European students were recruited to participate in the online questionnaire distributed on social media. We excluded data from 12 participants that did not fully complete the questionnaire. Thus, we obtained a total of 177 usable responses for the study (63.8% female, $M_{age} = 39.85$, $SD = 14.47$).

3.1.1.1. MEASURES

Self-attribution. Self-attribution was the first construct of analysis as a based measure of self-signals, to consider how respondents would feel if they bought a piece of clothing from the specific type of store they were exposed to. The items were adapted from Dixon & Mikolon (2020) scale and included: "Like I were a good person", "Like I were compassionate", "Like I were sympathetic", "Like I were cheap" and "Like I were selfish". Participants rated these constructs on a 7-point scale.

Symbolic Signaling. Symbolic signaling was another important construct to consider in the analysis, to measure what characteristics were felt by others if respondents bought the t-shirt at the store. For this mean, Aspara & Wittkowski (2018) scale was adapted, where the following values were

included: wealth, trendiness, smartness, nonconformity, pro-environment and thrift and, again, participants were asked to rate them on a 7-point scale.

Ownership. Another important construct included in this questionnaire, the goal was to depict consumers' ownership feelings or perceptions about an apparel item that hasn't been bought yet. The measurement items included in this scale were adapted from Fuchs, *et al.*, (2010), being: "Although I do not legally own this t-shirt yet, I have the feeling that it is 'my' t-shirt", "The t-shirt incorporates part of myself", "I feel connected to the t-shirt", "I feel a strong sense of closeness to the product" and "It is difficult to think of the t-shirt as mine". Participants rated the extent to which they agreed with the mentioned ownership statements on a 7-point scale.

Word of Mouth (WOM). Another construct adapted from the same authors - Fuchs, *et al.*, (2010) – was WOM, to assess whether respondents would share information about the item they liked at the type of store they were exposed to. This construct included 3 items: "...would recommend the products to your friends", "...would 'talk the t-shirt up' to others" and "would try to spread the word about the product", where participants had to rate them on a 7-point scale.

Status Relevance. In addition, status relevance was also considered as a way to understand to which extent participants place importance on status motives when considering a way of buying apparel. Status relevance was adapted from Fuchs, *et al.*, (2013) scale, with just one item: "How important are status motives (having high status, signaling high prestige, etc) when considering a way of buying in the fashion industry?", respondents were asked to rate this statement on a 7-point scale, varying from 1-"Not important at all" to 7-"Very Important".

Willingness to Purchase. An important dependent variable to be considered was willingness to purchase, adapted from Fuchs, *et al.*, (2010), where consumers were required to rate the extent to which they would be willing to purchase the t-shirt they liked at the specific store they were exposed to, on a 7-point scale ranging from 1-"Completely unlikely" to 7-"Almost Certain".

Willingness to Pay. Also, elicited with an open-ended response box, participants were asked to enter, in numeric values, how much they would be willing to pay for the referred t-shirt, as the construct to be measured here was willingness to pay.

Likelihood to Purchase. The last construct used in the same order of thoughts, was likelihood to purchase, adapted from Haws, Winterich & Naylor (2014), where respondents were needed to rate on a scale of 1-"Very Unlikely" to 7-"Very Likely", how likely it was for them to buy the t-shirt liked at the store.

Environmental Measures. Finally, we used two environment related constructs to acknowledge how individuals classify the extent to which they have consideration for the environmental consequences of their purchasing habits, both adapted from Haws, Winterich & Naylor (2014). The first one was a 6-item scale related to green items where participants had to rate on a 7-point scale varying from 1-"Strongly Disagree" to 7-"Strongly Agree", to what extent they agreed with the items: "It is important to me that the products I use do not harm the environment", "I consider the potential environmental impact of my actions when making many of my decisions", "My purchase habits are affected by my concern for our environment", "I am concerned about wasting the resources of our planet", "I would describe myself as environmentally responsible" and "I am willing to be

inconvenienced in order to take actions that are more environmentally friendly”. The second and last construct used was to measure what would respondents prefer between a traditional piece of clothing and an environmentally friendly (EF) one, both at the same price, rating on a 7-point scale ranging from 1-“I have strong preference for the traditional piece of clothing” to 7-“I have strong preference for the EF piece of clothing”.

3.1.2. RESULTS

The main analysis obtained from the pretest focuses on the possible effect that self-signaling and ownership might have on consumers’ decision to adopt conscious and sustainable behaviors or habits towards the fashion industry. We employed a series of analysis of variances (ANOVAs), including Post-Hoc Tests (least significant difference) to understand whether groups differ with regard to our control variables and established conditions (Slow Fashion, Fast Fashion and Thrift Shop).

Symbolic Signaling. When analyzing symbolic signaling constructs there was significant difference between Slow Fashion, Fast Fashion and Thrift Shop and symbolic signaling items ($F(12, 338) = 2.68, p = .002, \eta p^2 = .087$). This statistical relevance was noticed for the items “Nonconformity” ($F(2, 174) = 9.40, p = .000, \eta p^2 = .097$), where mean scores for Slow Fashion and Thrift Shop ($M = 3.61, SD = 1.74$ and $M = 3.46, SD = 1.61$, respectively) scored higher than Fast Fashion ($M = 2.40, SD = 1.52$) and the item “Pro-Environmental” ($F(2, 174) = 11.30, p = .000, \eta p^2 = .115$), again with Slow Fashion and Thrift Shop mean values higher than Fast Fashion ($M = 5.21, SD = 1.66$; $M = 4.76, SD = 1.83$ and $M = 3.58, SD = 2.24$ respectively). These statistically relevant values mean that participants feel that by considering buying in one of the two conditions (Slow Fashion or Thrift Shop) they are doing something that others do not do – Nonconformity - and that by choosing Slow Fashion or Thrift Shopping as a way of buying apparel, respondents feel that they are caring about the environment – Pro-Environmental. Thereby, a One-Way ANOVA was performed to analyze the behavior of the dependent variables - Nonconformity and Pro-Environmental - together with the established conditions (Slow Fashion, Fast Fashion and Thrift Shop), the results obtained were satisfactory, considering that there is significant difference on these items somewhere between the three conditions $F(2, 174) = 14.17, p = .000$. The Post-Hoc Tests stress the fact that there is a significant difference between Slow Fashion and Fast Fashion conditions considering that $p = .000$ and, in fact, Slow Fashion has a mean value significantly higher than Fast Fashion for the variables in analysis ($M = 4.41, SD = 1.50$ and $M = 2.99, SD = 1.51$ respectively). It also lays emphasis on the significant difference between Fast Fashion and Thrift Shop conditions, once $p = .000$ with Thrift Shop ($M = 4.11, SD = 1.53$) scoring higher than Fast Fashion ($M = 2.99, SD = 1.51$). In addition, Smartness showed up to be significant ($F(2, 174) = 3.67, p = .028, \eta p^2 = .040$), together with Frugal had mean values for the condition Thrift Shop ($M = 4.07, SD = 1.87$ and $M = 3.22, SD = 1.69$, respectively) higher than Fast Fashion ($M = 3.25, SD = 1.87$ and $M = 2.95, SD = 1.78$, respectively). The last captivating outcome from self-attribution construct is that the lowest mean value happened for the “Wealthy” variable on the Fast Fashion condition ($M = 2.67, SD = 1.83$), which actually makes sense, since Fast Fashion products’ buyers normally are not recognized as wealthy consumers.

Word of Mouth (WOM). Next, when it comes to the WOM items, although not predicted, we obtained a significant main effect where there was statistical relevance of these items when combined with the three conditions ($F(6, 334) = 2.24, p = .039, \eta p^2 = .038$). The significant difference happened for the first WOM item “...would recommend the t-shirt to your friends”, $F(2, 174) = 5.43$,

$p = .005$, $\eta p^2 = .059$, with Slow Fashion ($M = 5.05$, $SD = 1.56$) and Thrift Shop ($M = 5.05$, $SD = 1.50$) scoring higher than Fast Fashion ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 1.87$). The third WOM item "...would try to spell the word about the product" ($F(2, 174) = 3.84$, $p = .023$, $\eta p^2 = .042$), had a considerable mean value difference between Slow Fashion and Fast Fashion conditions ($M = 4.61$, $SD = 1.74$ and $M = 3.68$, $SD = 2.00$, respectively). For this reason, we conducted a One-Way ANOVA where the first and third WOM conditions were combined and analyzed within the conditions established for the study. The results prove that these variables differ significantly somewhere between the three conditions, $F(2, 174) = 4.98$, $p = .008$. The Post-Hoc Tests helped to clarify this statistical relevance, considering that between Slow Fashion and Fast Fashion conditions there was, effectively, a statistical relevance, $p = .009$ and, in fact, Slow Fashion had a mean value much higher than Fast Fashion for the variables in analysis ($M = 4.83$, $SD = 1.54$ and $M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.86$, respectively). It is important to mention that there was also a significant difference between Fast Fashion and Thrift Shop conditions, considering that $p = .047$ with Thrift Shop ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 1.47$) scoring higher than Fast Fashion ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.86$).

A mediation analysis was performed using the PROCESS SPSS macro (Model 4; Hayes, 2020) where, as suggested by Hayes (2020), if zero falls outside the 95% confidence interval (CI), the indirect effect is significant, therefore providing a successful mediation. This analysis followed a bootstrapping procedure that generated a sample size of 5000 to examine the mediation role of the combined variable symbolic signaling. A 95% bootstrap confidence interval for the indirect effect of interaction between the combined conditions Slow Fashion & Thrift Shop, versus Fast Fashion, and status through symbolic signaling was significant (indirect effect = $-.32$; 95% CI $[-.61, -.07]$; see Figure 2), therefore providing support for Hypothesis 1. In addition, Hypothesis 2 predicted that individuals' association with Slow Fashion & Thrift Shop increases the strength of symbolic signals (compared to Fast Fashion), which was validated with this analysis ($b = -1.27$, $SE = .24$, $p < .001$). Finally, corroborating Hypothesis 3, symbolic signals induced by Slow Fashion practices, elevate strong status motives ($b = .25$, $SE = .09$, $p < .005$). The bootstrapping analysis showed that the conditional direct effect of Slow Fashion & Thrift Shop, versus Fast Fashion, together on status motives was significantly mediated by symbolic signaling ($b = .67$, $SE = .32$, $p < .005$).

Lastly, neither self-attribution, ownership, willingness to purchase and to pay, status relevance, likelihood to purchase nor green items were sufficient on their own to fully mediate the analysis. All of the constructs were important to understand consumers' position, however, and as expected, not all of them were statistically relevant for analysis.

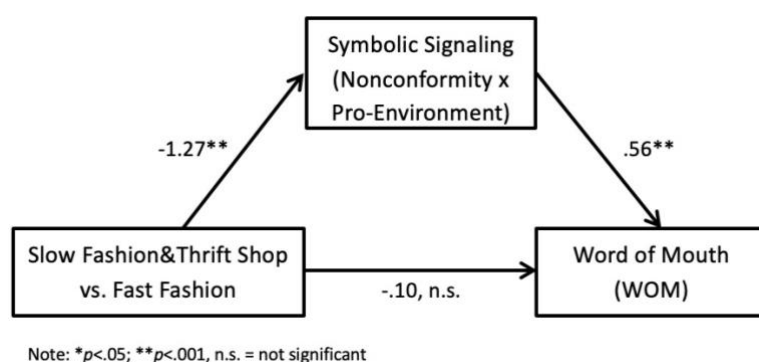


Figure 2 - Mediation Analysis Model for Study 1

3.1.3. DISCUSSION

The results of Study 1 proposed that participants have positive WOM towards Slow Fashion and Thrift Shop, but, at the same time, have low purchase intentions for apparel sold by these types of stores. Regarding symbolic signaling constructs, there was strong positive correlation between the variables “Nonconformity” and “Pro-Environmental”, together they move forward to the same goal, meaning that individuals consider that by choosing sustainable ways of buying apparel, in this case Slow Fashion and Thrift Shop items, they are doing something that other people do not do (Nonconformity) and caring for the environment at the same time (Pro-Environmental), providing support for Hypothesis 1. This shows that many people are already with fashion sustainable practices in mind and with strong intentions to connect with ethical brands.

In summary, the survey data provided consistent evidence that items from the construct symbolic signaling mediate the relationship between the condition (Slow Fashion & Thrift Shop vs. Fast Fashion) and WOM in this study analysis model – validating Hypothesis 2(a). Therefore, the more individuals approach Slow Fashion practices and, consequently, depart from Fast Fashion, the more they have the feeling that they are caring about the environment (pro-environment) together with acting in a way that others do not (nonconformity). As well as the more they have those pro-environmental and nonconformity feelings, higher the feelings of positive WOM regarding Slow Fashion and Thrift Shop items will be, hence corroborating Hypothesis 3(a). This analysis adds to Jacobs, *et al.*, (2018), as they demonstrate that attitude is a key antecedent of behavior in what respects sustainable clothing, along with the fact that it is essential to place high importance on positive attitudes towards social ecological clothing standards, also including the altruistic values of sustainable clothing buyers.

Finally, there are reasons to believe that including the variable ownership as a moderator can deepen the relation between Slow Fashion and Fast Fashion practices and the dependent variable. In the next study, we turned our attention to this theory, hence Study 2 will test whether ownership moderates the relation between Slow Fashion (vs. Fast Fashion) and symbolic signaling constructs.

3.2. STUDY 2

3.2.1. METHOD

Study 2 was designed to manipulate ownership through the customization of a clothing item (Jami, Kouchaki & Gino, 2020). Previous research showed that customizing an item presupposes that individuals self-invest in that product, increasing feelings of ownership towards a target (Kirk, et al., 2017). This was a study developed on Qualtrics, based on a two factor two level design (see Appendix D for complete detailed description of the study method scales used), where participants were asked to customize an apparel item of their choice in a specific store. Participants were exposed to one of two independent variables, namely Slow Fashion or Fast Fashion, in one of the two levels: ownership or control. In each of the conditions respondents saw a small text introducing them to the scenario where they should imagine they went to a Slow Fashion (or Fast Fashion) store. Next, they were exposed to one of the two levels to manipulate ownership. In the ownership condition they were told to imagine that they could customize one item of their choice that they would, posteriorly, buy for themselves and were submitted to an open-ended answer task where they were asked to describe how they would feel by wearing the customized item. Contrarily, in the control condition, they were told that they could customize the item to make the brand’s products more attractive and increase the

chance that people would buy its products, being asked to write what they liked or disliked about the item they customized.

Sample. In exchange for a small monetary compensation, participants were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk) platform. We obtained 214 valid answers from participants who properly completed the study (42.1% female, $M_{age} = 62.8$, $SD = 1.69$).

3.2.1.1. MEASURES

Ownership Reinforcement. To reinforce the ownership feelings for the customized item, we asked participants in the ownership condition to write three small sentences specifying how they would feel by owning the customized item. In the control condition, participants were required to write three small sentences, as well, but explaining what they liked or disliked about the customized apparel. This was an open-ended answer task adapted from Jami, Kouchaki & Gino's (2020) scale.

Word of Mouth (WOM). The WOM variable was adapted from Fuchs, *et al.*, (2010), including 3 items: "...would recommend the products to your friends", "...would 'talk the t-shirt up' to others" and "would try to spread the word about the product". This construct was used in Study 1 and was included in this study as well. Participants had to rate the items on a 7-point scale.

Symbolic Signaling. Symbolic signaling was also one of the constructs used in the previous study, being important to be considered in this analysis as well. Aspara & Wittkowski (2018) scale was adapted, where the following items were included: wealth, trendiness, smartness, nonconformity, pro-environment and thrift and, again, participants were asked to rate them on a 7-point scale.

Purchase Intentions. To capture participants' purchase intentions towards the customized item, a single item scale was adapted from Samper, Yang, & Daniels (2017) scale. Respondents had to rate how interested they would be in buying the final version of the item on a 7-point scale ranging from 1- "Not at all" to 7- "Very much".

Psychological Ownership. Psychological ownership was a relevant construct to include in this study, to portray consumers' ownership feelings or perceptions about the customized item in two different conditions (ownership and control). The measurement items included in this scale were adapted from Atasoy, & Morewedge (2017), being: "Feel a high degree of ownership of it", "Feel like I own it" and "Feel like it is mine". Participants rated the extent to which they agreed with the mentioned ownership statements on a 7-point scale.

Mine-me Sensitivity. An important dependent variable to include in the study was Mine-me Sensitivity, to depict the extent to which participants saw the customized item as part of their self-identity. This variable was adapted from Weiss & Johar (2013) scale, where respondents were required to rate the statement on a 7-point scale that ranged from 1- "Not at all part of myself" to 7- "Very much part of myself".

Status (Impression). Status was included as a way to understand to which extent status motives influence participants' decision to adopt a specific behavior in what respects the fashion industry. White & Peloza, (2009) scale was adapted, with nine items: "...I care about how positively others view me", "...I want to present myself in a positive way", "...I want to make a positive impression on others", "...I want to make myself look good to others", "...I want to do what is expected of me", "...I want to

do what other people think is right in each situation”, “...I want to do what the norm is”, “...I want to do what society believes is the right thing” and “...I want to do what others approve of”. Respondents were asked to rate this statement on a 7-point scale, varying from 1- “Not important at all” to 7- “Very Important”.

Environmentally Friendly Consumption Habits Frequency. This was a very important dependent variable to include to capture how often do participants engage in environmentally friendly behaviors, regarding to fashion items. The scale was adapted from Haws, Winterich, & Naylor (2014) and respondents were asked to answer in a 7-point scale, ranging from 1- “Never” to 7- “All the time”.

Fresh Start Mindset. Adapted from Price, *et al.*, (2017), the fresh start mindset scale was used to capture how respondents perceive a fresh start in life, in other words, how participants understand the fact that, regardless of past circumstances, people can get a new beginning and start a new chart in life. This variable included 6 items: “Regardless of present circumstances, someone can chart a new course in life”, “Anyone can make a new start if they want to”, “It’s always possible for someone to get a new beginning”, “Whatever their past, people can look forward to a new future”, “An individual can let go of the past and start anew” and “When something bad happens, a person can choose to create a better life”. This scale was measured using a 7-point Likert items.

3.2.2. RESULTS

A qualitative analysis of the answers obtained in the open-ended questions was conducted (see Appendix E for more detail). In this analysis, only answers composed of at least one well-written word considered relevant to answer the proposed question, and that expressed a valid opinion were considered. There were several key words common in each condition, such as: comfort, fit, style, proud, happiness, uniqueness, quality, price, design, colors, fashion, etc. Besides these keywords, some important answers are worth mentioning in each of the conditions established in this study. Firstly, in the Slow Fashion and Ownership conditions, in general, there were numerous answers about how good it would be to own the customized item (e.g.: “I would enjoy owning something that shows who I am”) and about the sustainable strand of the item, such as “I am looking out for the world's well-being” or “Thinking about sustainability means thinking about your family, your neighbor and yourself”. Regarding the Slow Fashion and Control conditions, there were some statements about the fabric of the customizable item (e.g.: “I wonder if the functionality/durability will be there if the focus is customization” or “I dislike that that only color, design, lettering and font style could be customized but not the fabric”) and, once again, concerning sustainability in this industry: “I really like the product to be sustainable” or “I would like that they were all sustainable clothing options”. Next, in what respects the Fast Fashion and Ownership conditions, the majority of respondents mentioned the feeling of ownership towards the item (e.g.: “Like it was mine, a different kind of ownership”), about statement when wearing the customized item (e.g.: “I can show who I am” and “I feel this expresses me”) and about other feelings on the item: “I would feel ordinary and regular” and “I would feel cheap/basic”. Finally, on the Fast Fashion and Control conditions, in general, there were verdicts about the price (e.g.: “I liked the price”), the durability of the fabrics (e.g.: “Fabrics seemed non-durable”), the quality (e.g.: “Poor quality”) and sustainability was also one of the topics addressed, “Didn't like that it was not environmentally friendly”.

Symbolic Signaling. After computing the symbolic signaling construct items in a new dependent variable and conducting all the necessary analysis on SPSS, it is possible to affirm that there

was significant difference between the conditions (Slow Fashion & Fast Fashion x Ownership & Control) when considered jointly on the symbolic signaling variable ($F(1,215) = 5.17, p = .024, \eta p^2 = .023$). The highest mean value showed up for the variable “Pro-Environmental” on the Slow Fashion and Control condition ($M = 5.60, SD = 1.41$), which means that respondents feel that, when customizing a clothing item at a Slow Fashion store, are caring about the environment. Contrariwise, the lowest value was for the “Frugal” item on the Slow Fashion and Ownership conditions ($M = 3.88, SD = 1.84$) – the only statistical relevant item on the Multivariate analysis that comprehends the whole construct ($p = .012$) – meaning that respondents consider that customizing an item that would posteriorly be bought by them in a Slow Fashion store is something that would make them look like they live simply and economically. Actually, to be frugal includes using items from brands with long term use (which is one of the characteristics of Slow Fashion apparel).

Status (Impression). Finally, the status items combined with age as a control variable, came up to be statistically significant ($F(1,214) = 5.05, p = .026, \eta p^2 = .023$). This can be explained by the fact that the adoption of certain behavior in the fashion industry (for example embracing Slow Fashion) can be influenced by status motives, more specifically, people seem to adopt those behaviors because they care about how positively others view themselves. The mean values, when analyzed separately were all close to each other, where the highest value ($M = 5.30, SD = 1.23$) was registered for the Slow Fashion and Control conditions and the lowest was registered for the Fast Fashion and Control condition as well ($M = 4.66, SD = 1.39$). It is possible to say that the adoption of a specific behavior towards sustainability in the fashion industry is somehow impacted by status motives, specifically: “...I care about how positively others view me”, “...I want to present myself in a positive way”, “...I want to make a positive impression on others”, “...I want to make myself look good to others”, “...I want to do what is expected of me”, “...I want to do what other people think is right in each situation”, “...I want to do what the norm is”, “...I want to do what society believes is the right thing” and “...I want to do what others approve of”.

A moderated mediation analysis was conducted using the PROCESS SPSS macro (Model 8; Hayes, 2020). As proposed by Hayes (2020), if zero falls outside the 95% confidence interval (CI), the indirect effect is significant, therefore providing a successful moderated mediation. In this analysis we used 5000 bootstrapped samples, to examine the moderated mediation role of the variable ownership (ownership versus control conditions) and the combined variable symbolic signaling, with age as a covariance variable. A 95% bootstrap confidence interval for the moderated indirect effect of interaction between the combined conditions Slow Fashion versus Fast Fashion and status was statistically significant (indirect effect = $-.57$; 95% CI $[-1.06, -.13]$; see Figure 3). The interaction term was also significant ($p = .012$), indicating that the direct effect of the type of fashion (Slow vs Fast) on the combined variable symbolic signaling was moderated by ownership. The moderated mediation analysis got us to the conclusion that symbolic signals induced by Slow Fashion practices, elevate strong status motives ($b = .65, SE = .06, p < .001$). The bootstrapping analysis showed that the conditional direct effect of Slow Fashion versus Fast Fashion together on status motives was not significantly mediated (n.s.) by symbolic signaling ($b = -.10, SE = .15, p = .480$). In addition, the idea that individuals associated with Slow Fashion practices increases the strength of symbolic signals (compared to Fast Fashion) could not be validated with this analysis ($b = -.21, SE = .17, p = .230$).

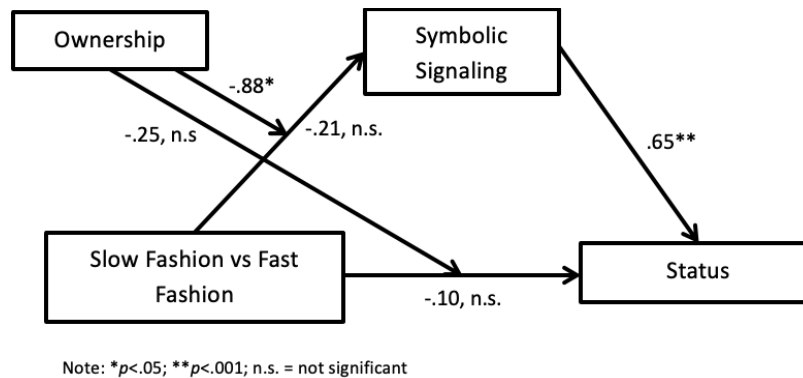


Figure 3 - Moderated Mediation Model for Study 2

3.2.3. DISCUSSION

The results from Study 2 show that symbolic signaling does not mediate the relation between fashion practices (Slow Fashion vs. Fast Fashion) and status motives, therefore it was not possible to validate Hypothesis 2(b), and that ownership, as predicted, has a moderation role on the tested model. In line with the Study 1, the findings provide support for the hypothesis that symbolic signals induced by Slow Fashion practices elevate strong status motives (Hypothesis 3(b)), meaning that individuals use products (or engage in some specific behavior) for status signaling, communicating to others who they are (or what kind of person they desire others to think they are), (Baca-Motes, *et al.*, 2013). In addition, this study helped to prove that individuals' association with Slow Fashion increases the strength of symbolic signals (compared to Fast Fashion), under the moderation role of ownership, therefore corroborating Hypothesis 4. In fact, respondents exposed to the ownership condition, in general, manifested themselves about how amazing it would feel to own the customized item, where this feeling increased when we were referring to a sustainable item (therefore on the Slow Fashion condition). The same feeling of ownership happened for the Fast Fashion condition, but here participants also reported that they would feel "regular" and "cheap" owning the item.

These findings fit with the notion that ownership contributes to ones' self-perception, inhibiting the ability to redefine their selves (Lamberton & Goldsmith, 2020), together with the fact that individuals engage in a conspicuous consumption (signaling status to others), adopting environmentally friendly products (here, sustainable apparel) to signal positive characteristics to others that one is a green consumer (Dixon & Mikolon, 2020).

4. GENERAL DISCUSSION

The motivation of this research is to expand the debate on sustainable issues in the fashion industry by exploring the existing correlation with self-signaling theory, ownership, WOM and status motives. There has been a noteworthy rise in awareness for sustainable fashion practices all over the world and there must be an effort to embrace cleaner production processes in the fashion industry. In fact, the shift towards eco-friendly fashion practices depends on a shared effort, with commitment of all actors involved in the industry, meaning that individual action alone is not enough to lead to significant transformation in this sector (Blasi, Brigato & Sedita, 2020).

Across two studies, we provide evidence that individuals have positive WOM towards Slow Fashion and Thrift Shop, but, at the same time, low purchase intentions for apparel available in these types of stores. In addition, we demonstrate that individuals' choice to engage in Slow Fashion increases the strength of symbolic signals (compared to Fast Fashion), under the moderation role of ownership and that these strong symbolic signals triggered by Slow Fashion practices elevate strong status motives. These studies corroborate existing research suggesting that people try to choose products to signal information about their own attributes to themselves, along with the fact that they can also engage in social-signaling behaviors to deliver information about one's characteristics and values to an external audience (Savary & Goldsmith, 2020). We next discuss the implications of these findings for theory and practice, also presenting limitations and avenues for future research.

4.1. THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Understanding the impact of sustainable fashion practices on consumption behavior is becoming more and more critical nowadays, as there is an increasingly number of companies focusing on products and processes designed to minimize environmental harm. This research examines the relationship between the adoption of a more environmentally friendly behavior in what respects the fashion industry and the concepts of self-signaling, ownership, WOM and status motives. Therefore, our results make several contributions to the existing literature on the mentioned topics. Unlike most of the available research on self-signaling (e.g., Savary, Li & Newman, 2020; Dubé, Luo & Fang, 2017; Savary, Goldsmith & Dhar, 2015), here we did not focus on the charitable and donation relation existing with the concept, we focused rather on the simple fact that people make their own choices to signal something for their own selves about their values and traits, including selfish or altruistic motives. With regard to ownership, WOM and status, these are notions that strongly relate to one another and to the act of purchasing, especially together with sustainability in the fashion industry. This work is conceivably the first to put all of these concepts together and study the relation that they might have, fulfilling the existing gap in this area.

Examining the mediating role of self-signaling (more specifically symbolic signaling construct) provides new evidence that the relationship between sustainable fashion practices and WOM (Study 1) and status motives (Study 2) is conciliated by those items, namely pro-environmental and nonconformity. These variables together move forward to the same goal, meaning that individuals consider that by choosing sustainable ways of buying apparel are doing something that other people do not do (Nonconformity) and caring for the environment at the same time (Pro-Environmental). This shows that many people are already with fashion sustainable practices in mind, with strong intentions to connect with ethical brands. Actually, consumers that prefer green options to standard ones tend

to be more knowledgeable towards sustainable products, relying on the companies associated to them, believing that those products are of good value and high quality and truly trusting that, by purchasing such products, will have a positive impact on the planet and its resources (Gleim, *et al.*, 2013).

As a result of Study 1, the more people feel the symbolic signaling feelings mentioned, higher their willingness to share positive WOM about sustainable fashion products will be, meaning that when people know that they are doing something that is environmentally friendly and that usually other people do not do, they confirmed that they would like to spread the word about those behaviors, therefore engaging in a positive WOM. This adds to the existing literature in the sense that, WOM arises when individuals have strong feelings toward a particular experience and can motivate other consumers to engage in a specific behavior (Moise, *et al.*, 2019). We also demonstrate that individuals have positive WOM towards Slow Fashion and Thrift Shop, but, at the same time, low purchase intentions for apparel available in these types of stores. These facts led us to a conclusion where individuals engage in a false competitive altruism, as they have intentions to share the word about those items but do not plan to buy them. Despite all the movements in the direction of sustainable fashion practices, there is still a lack of information on the topic. For example, consumers usually associate green or sustainable products with lower quality and still, they might choose a green product over a standard one even though they think that the decision results in incurring in costs for themselves (lower quality and greater price), but by making that choice they can signal a positive information to others (and for themselves as well) related to environmental friendliness and improved ethical behavior (Dixon & Mikolon, 2020).

Additionally, Study 2 revealed that the symbolic signals induced by Slow Fashion elevate strong status motives. When individuals engage in some specific behavior, in this case embracing Slow Fashion, they feel like they can signal information about themselves to an audience, as Bellezza, Gino & Keinan (2014) stated, conformity motives can strongly drive consumption practices and choices in the marketplace. These facts contribute to the existing theoretical literature, since people display their status and signal positive characteristics to others (and themselves as well) through their behaviors and consumption habits, including the regulation of their social relationships by means of their possessions (Jami, Kouchaki & Gino, 2020), together with the facts that the preferences for eco-friendly products rise when status motives are activated in a public ambience (in comparison to preferences for luxury products), (Didonato & Jakubiak, 2015) and the notion that fashion products are highly identity relevant, allowing people to form their self-concept and communicate it to others (Fuchs, *et al.*, 2013).

Extending previous work, we focused on how ownership affects individuals' association with Slow Fashion, with the decision to leave out Fast Fashion. We proposed and found that ownership moderates the effect of Slow Fashion (vs. Fast Fashion) practices on symbolic signals. Research has shown that possessions are a central aspect of contemporary life (Jami, Kouchaki & Gino, 2020), where one of its main characteristics is having control for the right to use any object or item (Kirk, Peck & Swain, 2017). In addition, it has been said that people usually prefer to buy products from brands that reflect their identity (Sheehan & Dommer, 2019), to a point that those products become part of individual's extended self (Pierce, Kostova & Dirks, 2003). In fact, according to Fuchs *et al.* (2013), fashion can be assessed as a "costuming of the ego". With Study 2 we were able to add to this concept by showing that individuals' feelings of ownership appeared to be more intense when associated to

the opportunity of acquiring a sustainable fashion item. This means that our respondents, when picturing the idea of owning a Slow Fashion item and showing a positive attitude towards that thought, were able to evaluate their own individual values and create an emotional attachment, assessing their behavior towards the item. Finally, it should be mentioned that the growth of sustainability concerns in the fashion industry is reinforced by the fact that consumers are starting to shift to new ownership models and trying to move away from permanent ownership of clothing, opting, for example, for renting items rather than purchasing and owning them (Amed, 2018).

4.2. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

In addition to our various contributions to theory, the findings in this research have some implications for both managers in the fashion industry or consumer behaviorists and individuals interested in knowing more about fashion sustainability and consumers' shift in behavior. Given that individuals' association with Slow Fashion promotes and increases symbolic signals of pro-environmentally and nonconformity (when compared to Fast Fashion), highlighting the actual attributes of sustainable apparel and trying to provide an explanation of the production processes and the materials that compose each garment may powerfully increase recommendation behavior, or even convert "non-green" consumers that don't believe, or are not interested, in sustainability in the fashion industry. Thus, managers and fashion practitioners should provide information that communicate detailed explanations on the benefits and production processes of apparel, including what makes it environmentally friendly, as well as its attributes, showing that it is of good value and worth its price. Consumers need to have available information about how harmful Fast Fashion is for the environment and be aware of how their behavior can aggravate the situation of our planet, this is where organizations and managers have to come up to actually instigate consumers' shift in behavior towards Slow Fashion and sustainable fashion practices. As Gleim, et al., (2013) suggested: "consumers not only need to be told about green products and the relevant benefits, but also what makes the product environmentally friendly".

Our research bears potentially important managerial insights by highlighting the importance of WOM towards a more sustainable fashion consumption patterns, in other words, Slow Fashion. We demonstrate that participants included in Study 1 revealed positive WOM regarding Slow Fashion items and that, the more they have pro-environmental and nonconformity feelings for purchasing sustainable items, higher their willingness to share positive WOM about such items. Thus, a key question for marketers to consider is to invest in campaigns that can stimulate WOM. Managers should use WOM in their favor to increase the company's success. In fact, marketers have begun to seek ways to promote WOM and, as suggested by Blasi, Brigato & Sedita (2020), a company can bring out messages through advertising (for example, through social media) and use it to move conversations with consumers in particular directions. For example, using social media influencers to positively influence consumers to adopt sustainable fashion behaviors, promoting environmentally friendly fashion items. According to 2019's Global Fashion Agenda, there has been an increase in positive sustainability mentions on social media, representing the third higher than the overall growth of social media posts (Lehmann, *et al.*, 2019).

This work's findings suggest that activating status motives can be seen as an effective approach for promoting sustainable behaviors towards the fashion industry. In fact, with Study 2, it was possible to validate the hypothesis that individuals purchase specific products (here, Slow Fashion items) for

status signaling, using that behavior to signal who they are, or specific traits they own that they want to expose, to an audience. These results can be useful for fashion organizations that may be trying to become greener as an effective path for their strategies, since status can truly be seen as a significant tool for encouraging a more sustainable and conscious behavior towards the fashion industry. In addition, understanding the factors that affect consumers' likelihood of making a Slow Fashion item purchase and increasing awareness for the availability of such products in retail stores should be a major concern for managers, not only to reach consumers that already engage in sustainable clothing purchases, but also as a way to attract individuals that are less willing to embrace Slow Fashion, along with providing solid information about sustainability concerns in clothing.

Finally, as Study 2 revealed, ownership moderates the relation between the fashion practices (Slow Fashion vs. Fast Fashion) and symbolic signals, meaning that individuals' association with Slow Fashion increases the strength of symbolic signals, when compared to Fast Fashion, under the moderation role of ownership. Thus, when defining their marketing strategies, managers should consider consumers' feelings of ownership, including purchase and products' usage decisions, since these give them valuable information about consumption patterns, bearing in mind that consumers use consumption to reinforce their identity and possessions become part of individuals' extended self (Sheehan & Dommer, 2019).

4.3. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

As it has been said, this work entails important theoretical and practical contributions, yet there were certain limitations that offer directions for future research. First, future work should draw on larger samples including a wider variety of cultures and, more importantly, there should be an extra attention to the age range from samples, considering that this research's sample included mostly individuals from middle to older ages. Younger generations are already known for showing a growing interest for sustainability related topics and are more likely to take this interest into real actions (Pasquarelli, 2019). Future research could focus on young individuals and examine their actual sustainable purchasing (or consumption) habits to gather the most precise picture of human behavior, since this work focused only on hypothetical scenarios of items' purchase intentions and involved only self-reported surveys, that usually leave room for doubt about the accuracy of respondents' behavior. For example, according to Johnson & Chattaraman (2018), consumers from the millennial generation are looking to reduce, or even eliminate, new purchases and are mainly focused on reselling used products, therefore engaging in Slow Fashion, and dropping the impact that Fast Fashion has on people and the planet due to overconsumption. Additionally, younger consumers are more interested in sustainable clothing than older consumers (Amed, 2018). In sum, studies with larger and younger consumer samples will increase the validity of our findings and provide additional support for the hypothesis considered in this analysis.

Next, the current work didn't put emphasis on the main reasons that lead people to actually embrace green causes and, in this case, engage in sustainable clothing purchasing. Future researchers may find it interesting to explore other contextual variables that can elucidate the motivations to become more sustainable and what really stands behind not embracing Slow Fashion, bearing in mind the relationship between the parties involved in the analysis (self-signaling, ownership, WOM and status motives). Another important limitation that can be addressed to this work, and that could highly enrich a possible extension of it, is to comprehend liquidity in the investigation. Previous research has

already proven that fashion cycles are becoming progressively shorter, thus reducing the volume of clothing production and consumption would bring numerous benefits on environmental, social and individual levels (Burcikova, 2019). For this reason, future researchers should understand apparel durability as an important aspect of fashion sustainability. In the same line of thoughts, it would also make sense to develop a deeper exploitation (and correlation with the theories in this analysis) of the act of thrift shopping. Shopping for second-handed clothing is one of the most sustainable ways of using apparel (Shrivastava, *et al.*, 2021). According to the ThredUp platform, shopping for second handed clothing discards the need for new clothing production and heads off items from landfills, together with the fact that buying one used item reduces its waste, carbon and water footprints by 82%. Additionally, thrifting models contribute to lengthening items' lifecycle, while offering the newness that consumers are always on the search for (Amed, 2018).

Regarding WOM, we are aware that this phenomenon is not exempt of bias, considering that it is "(...) the informal interpersonal communication regarding a brand, a product, an organization or a service (...)" (Moise, *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, WOM is based on individuals' shared experiences and on their opinions, so, usually, it is not based on actual consumption and firms cannot have direct control on the possible negative rebound that WOM might have. Thus, we recommend future research to dig deeper into the motivations for different people to spread the word (engage in WOM) about a specific product, item or brand. Additionally, future studies could investigate and assess if consumers reveal any feelings of guilt derived from consuming unsustainable apparel, *i.e.*, Fast Fashion items. Previous research has already shown that those feelings of guilt can elicit fear, guilt and shame, being possible that these activate a repair behavior in individuals and positively affect their intention to adopt responsible behaviors (Amatulli, *et al.*, 2020), as it is the case of embracing green causes, such as buying sustainable apparel items. Hence, it would be interesting to investigate if the results would converge to the existing evidence from previous works on the topic.

Another alternative avenue for future research could be to deepen the concept of the fresh start mindset and extend the relation of it to the adoption of a sustainable behavior in the fashion industry, the current studies included, in Study 2, a scale adapted from Price, *et al.* (2017), that didn't show any significant behavioral effect. Hence, a more extensive future model could examine with different factors a viable correlation between the construct and individuals' shift in behavior, as we are talking about a topic which's central goal is to help people make positive changes in their lives and quit bad habits. Future research could also scout out the costly signaling theory and the investigate how individuals would behave (in terms of their decisions towards fashion sustainability) when shopping in public or in private. This approach would be important to capture if consumers' desire for sustainability would increase in a public situation or not, once, as suggested by the costly signaling theory, for a signal to be effective, actions should be costly and observable by others (Bellezza, Gino & Keinan, 2014), plus there is a notion that argues that actions in public can influence an individual's reputation to a much greater extent than actions taken in a private setting (Griskevicius, Tybur & Bergh, 2010). Finally, our research can be further extended to examine additional potential moderators for the proposed model, by means of assessing other consumption phenomena, finding other construct that could moderate the relation between sustainable fashion practices, symbolic signaling and status, besides ownership.

Fashion sustainability is a continuously evolving topic, as people are starting to show a rising awareness regarding how harmful this industry is. In fact, fashion is a highly resource demanding,

polluting and wasteful industry, where most of its practices are contributing to the degradation of the environment and systems that sustain life (Connor-Crabb & Rigby, 2019). However, there is still a lot of progress to happen in what respects consumers' shift in behavior towards a more sustainable fashion environment and future research should continue to refine scales, always in the search for the most accurate measurement of this extremely important movement that stands for Slow Fashion.

5. REFERENCES

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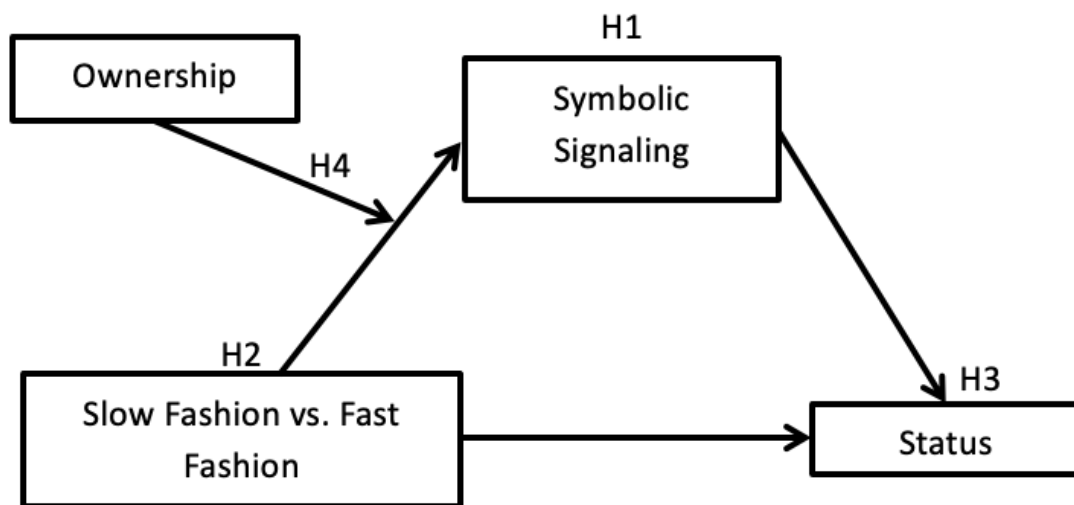
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6. APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A: Conceptual Framework



APPENDIX B: Study 1 - Measures of Self-Signaling and Ownership

Constructs	Measurement items	References
Self-attribution–based measure of self-signals	“How would you feel if you made the choice of buying the t-shirt?” (7-point scale: 1= “Strongly Disagree”; 7= “Strongly Agree”) Like I were a good person. Like I were compassionate. Like I were sympathetic. Like I were cheap. (reverse coded) Like I were selfish. (reverse coded)	(Dixon, & Mikolon, 2020)
Symbolic Signaling	“Choosing this way of buying the t-shirt, indicates to others that...” (7-point scale: 1= “Strongly Disagree”; 7= “Strongly Agree”) ...that I am wealthy. (wealth) ...that I am going with a trend. (trendiness) ...that I am smart. (smartness) ...that I am doing something others do not do. (nonconformity) ...that I am caring about the environment. (pro-environment) ...that I am frugal. (thrift)	(Aspara, & Wittkowski, 2018)
Psychological Ownership	“How do you feel about the t-shirt you liked at the store?” (7-point scale: 1= “Strongly Disagree”; 7= “Strongly Agree”) Although I do not legally own these T-shirts yet, I have the feeling that they are ‘my’ T-shirts. The selected T-shirts incorporate a part of myself. I feel that these products belong to me. I feel connected to these T-shirts. I feel a strong sense of closeness with these products. It is difficult for me to think of these T-shirts as mine.	(Fuchs, <i>et al.</i> , 2010)
Willingness to Purchase	“Imagine you could now buy the t-shirt that you liked. Would you be interested in buying it?” (7-point scale: 1= “Completely unlikely”; 7= “Almost Certain”)	(Fuchs, <i>et al.</i> , 2010)
Willingness to Pay (WTP)	“How much would you pay for the white t-shirt you liked at the store? (only numerical values - euros)” - WTP was elicited with an open-ended response box. Participants entered the maximum amount of money that they were willing to pay for the good	(Vohs & Faber, 2007)
Word-of-Mouth (WOM) intentions	“Regarding the t-shirt you liked at the store, you...” (7-point scale: 1= “Strongly disagree”; 7= “Strongly Agree”) I would recommend the products in this collection to my friends. I would ‘talk these T-shirts up’ to others. I would try to spread the word about these products.	(Fuchs, <i>et al.</i> , 2010)
Status Relevance	“How important are status motives (having high status, signaling high prestige, etc.) when considering a way of buying in the fashion industry?” (7-point scale: 1= “Not important at all”; 7= “Very important”).	(Fuchs, <i>et al.</i> , 2013)
Likelihood purchase	“How likely is it that you would buy the t-shirt that you liked at the store?” (7-point scale: 1= “Very unlikely”; 7= “Very likely”).	(Haws, Winterich, & Naylor, 2014)

Green Items	<p>“On a scale of 1 to 7 indicate, for you, the extent to which:” (7-point scale: 1= “Strongly Disagree”; 7= “Strongly Agree”)</p> <p>It is important to me that the products I use do not harm the environment.</p> <p>I consider the potential environmental impact of my actions when making many of my decisions.</p> <p>My purchase habits are affected by my concern for our environment.</p> <p>I am concerned about wasting the resources of our planet.</p> <p>I would describe myself as environmentally responsible.</p> <p>I am willing to be inconvenienced in order to take actions that are more environmentally friendly.</p>	(Haws, Winterich, & Naylor, 2014)
Traditional Product vs Environmentally Friendly (EF) Product	<p>“If you had to make a choice between a traditional piece of clothing and an environmentally friendly (EF) product of equal value:” 7-point scale: 1= “I have a strong preference for the traditional piece of clothing”; 7= “I have a strong preference for the EF piece of clothing.”</p>	(Haws, Winterich, & Naylor, 2014)

APPENDIX C: Study 1 image displayed for participants



APPENDIX D: Study 2 – Measurements and Scales

Constructs	Measurement items	Adapted from
Ownership Reinforcement	<p>“Imagine yourself wearing the item that you customized at the store and write 3 small sentences of how you would feel at that moment.”</p> <p>Sentence 1 (open-ended)</p> <p>Sentence 2 (open-ended)</p> <p>Sentence 3 (open-ended)</p>	(Jami, Kouchaki & Gino, 2020)
Word-of-Mouth (WOM) intentions (previous study)	<p>“Regarding the customized apparel, you...” (7-point likert scale: 1= “Strongly Disagree”; 7= “Strongly Agree”)</p> <p>I would recommend the products in this collection to my friends.</p> <p>I would ‘talk these store’s products up’ to others.</p> <p>I would try to spread the word about these products.</p>	(Fuchs, <i>et al.</i> , 2010)
Symbolic Signaling (previous study)	<p>“Opting to buy the customized item, indicates to others that...” (7-point scale: 1= “Strongly Disagree”; 7= “Strongly Agree”)</p> <p>...that I am wealthy. (wealth)</p> <p>...that I am going with a trend. (trendiness)</p> <p>...that I am smart. (smartness)</p> <p>...that I am doing something others do not do. (nonconformity)</p> <p>...that I am caring about the environment. (pro-environment)</p> <p>...that I am frugal. (thrift)</p>	(Aspara, & Wittkowski, 2018)
Purchase intentions	<p>“Think about the final version of the item customized by you. How interested would you be in purchasing it?” 7-point scale (1= “Not at all”; 7= “Very much”)</p>	(Samper, Yang, & Daniels, 2017)
Psychological ownership	<p>“How do you feel about the customized apparel?” (7-point scale: 1= “Strongly Disagree”; 7= “Strongly Agree”)</p> <p>Feel a very high degree of personal ownership of it</p> <p>Feel like I own it</p> <p>Feel like it is mine</p>	(Atasoy, & Morewedge, 2017)
Mine-me Sensitivity	<p>“People vary on the extent to which they see different objects as part of their personal self-identity. For this study, please indicate the extent to which the apparel that you customized is part of your personal self-identity.” (7-point scale: 1= “Not at all part of my self”; 7= “Very much part of my self”)</p>	(Weiss & Johar, 2013)
Status	<p>“You adopt certain behavior (eg: embrace slow fashion or buying second handed clothing) because...” (7-point scale: 1= “Strongly Disagree”; 7= “Strongly Agree”)</p> <p>...I care about how positively others view me.</p> <p>...I want to present myself in a positive way.</p> <p>...I want to make a positive impression on others.</p> <p>...I want to make myself look good to others.</p> <p>...I want to do what is expected of me.”</p> <p>...I want to do what other people think is right in each situation.</p>	(White & Peloza, 2009)

	<p>...I want to do what the norm is.</p> <p>...I want to do what society believes is the right thing.</p> <p>...I want to do what others approve of.</p>	
Environmentally friendly consumption habits frequency	<p>“How often do you engage in environmentally friendly consumption behaviors, regarding to fashion items?” (7-point scale: 1= “Never”; 7= “All the time”).</p>	(Haws, Winterich, & Naylor, 2014)
Fresh Start Mindset	<p>“Please indicate the extent to which you agree (or disagree) with the following statements, in relation to embracing a new and more conscious behavior towards fashion sustainability:” (7-point scale: 1= “Strongly Disagree”; 7= “Strongly Agree”)</p> <p>Regardless of present circumstances, someone can chart a new course in life.</p> <p>Anyone can make a new start if they want to.</p> <p>It’s always possible for someone to get a new beginning.</p> <p>Whatever their past, people can look forward to a new future.</p> <p>An individual can let go of the past and start anew.</p> <p>When something bad happens, a person can choose to create a better life.</p>	(Price, <i>et al.</i> , 2017)

APPENDIX E: Open-ended question analysis from Study 2

Condition	Count	Keywords	Conclusion	Notes
Slow Fashion & Ownership	36*	<p>Original, unique, fashion, fit, comfort, quality, color, design, nice, useful, proud, happy, style, important, confident, excited, sustainable, elegant, authentic, great, good.</p> <p>"It would be nice to own.", "I would enjoy owning something unique", "I would enjoy owning something that shows who I am", "It feels great to own it", "I love it that I own it", "I can't wait to share he news with my loved ones", "Excited to show off", "I'd feel proud that I had a part in designing my clothing.", "I'd be excited each time I wore it.", "I would feel like i'm wearing haute couture.", "I would feel like it was made for me.", "I would feel a sense of pride customizing my clothes", "I would feel special as its completely based on my idea", "Thinking about sustainability means thinking about your family, your neighbor and yourself.", "A responsible person who cares about environment", "Different from others", "I am doing something good", "I am looking out for the world's well-being", "I'm contributing to a better habit".</p>	There are 36 valid answers in the Slow Fashion and Ownership conditions.*	<p>*the answers considered valid are all those that are composed of at least one well-written word, relevant to answer the proposed question, and that express an opinion.</p>
				<p>*considering only valid answers of people exposed to Slow Fashion and Ownership conditions.</p>
Slow Fashion & Control	30*	<p>Quality, design, colors, price, style, uniqueness.</p> <p>"I would like the clothes to be made of cotton", "If the color and quality of the fabric should not change while washing the fabric then I has like it", "If the price of the fabric should be in line with the quality of the fabric then I like it.", "I like that the store only offers sustainable clothing.", "I like that the store is interested in offering more attractive items to its customers.", "I wonder if the functionality/durability will be there if the focus is customization", "I dislike that that only color, design, lettering and font style could be customized but not the fabric.", "I like my imagination about design and style could be sold to others.", "Opportunity to acquire a more personalized look.", "Cloth quality is good, which i like most", "I really like the product to be sustainable.", "I would like that they were all sustainable clothing options.", "Helping the environment", "Happy with a new experience".</p>	There are 30 valid answers in the Slow Fashion and Control conditions.*	<p>*the answers considered valid are all those that are composed of at least one well-written word, relevant to answer the proposed question, and that express an opinion.</p>
				<p>*considering only valid answers of people exposed to the non-meat condition.</p>
Fast Fashion & Ownership	45*	<p>Quality, fit, happiness, fashion, color, design, proud, smartness, innovative, low price, comfort, unique, original, satisfied, powerful, creative.</p> <p>"I can show who I am", "I would feel like it is mine", "I feel this expresses me", "I would feel ordinary and regular.", "I would not feel like i stand out.", "I would feel like owning this garment says something about how much money I have", "Introducing new innovative customized clothes to the society which is extraordinary and new.", "I would be a model if i wear my customized clothes to the society.", "I would feel cheap", "I would feel basic", "I would feel ridiculous", "I would enjoy the fact that my designed clothing item would be one of a kind and not replicated from a model or celebrity.", "I would feel happy if someone would compliment me on my designed item while wearing it.", "It's hard to find someone who choose same customization", "I'm the owner of a one of a kind item.", "Like it was mine, a different kind of ownership", "I will be super excited that the cloth is mine".</p>	There are 45 valid answers in the Fast Fashion & Ownership condition.*	<p>*the answers considered valid are all those that are composed of at least one well-written word, relevant to answer the proposed question, and that express an opinion.</p>
				<p>*considering only valid answers of people exposed to the meat condition.</p>
Fast Fashion & Control	25*	<p>Color, fit, style, affordable price, comfort, trendy, environmental impact.</p> <p>"I like eco friendly material clothes", "I liked the price", "I was not impressed by the quality", "The costs are reasonable", "Poor quality", "It was too cheap", "Not good quality", "Fabrics seemed non-durable", "It was low quality", "Didn't like the quality", "Love sustainable materials", "Hate poliester", "Didn't like that it was not environmentally friendly".</p>	There are 46 valid answers in the meat condition.*	<p>*the answers considered valid are all those that are composed of at least one well-written word, relevant to answer the proposed question, and that express an opinion.</p>
				<p>*considering only valid answers of people exposed to the meat condition.</p>

